



SafeRoutes News

The Safe Routes To Schools Newsletter Fall 2007



Safe Routes takes the lead in San Rafael's Sun Valley neighborhood's annual Labor Day parade and picnic. Pictured are Shawn Jones, Davis McDowell, and Zachary Thompson. Photo by Jim & Rebecca Thomson.

COMMUNITY EFFORT MAKES SUN VALLEY PROGRAM A SUCCESS

How it Works

SUN VALLEY SCHOOL is one of the highest performing schools in the Marin Safe Routes to Schools program. According to classroom surveys, from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007 the school saw a 22% shift away from kids being driven to/from school alone. In Spring 2005, 26% of the kids were walking and biking to school. By Spring 2007, 38% were coming to school under their own power. Carpooling increased from 11% to 17% in that same period. These changes are a direct result of the whole community's involvement in the program.

School Support

Principal Julie Harris is a firm believer in the Safe Routes to Schools program. "It is promoting the health and wellness of the children. If they walk to school, they get more exercise, they come to school more alert and it also reduces cars

on the street, which reduces the carbon impact. Teacher involvement really helps strengthen the program," she adds. "If the whole school is involved, momentum builds and grows. I really think that it is so successful because teachers, students, parents and neighbors have rallied around Safe Routes to Schools. It has given us a common vision and goal with the neighborhood."

Neighborhood Joins In

George Miller, chairperson of the Sun Valley neighborhood association, couldn't agree more. "It's been extremely helpful," he says. "It brings a lot of energy to what we're trying to accomplish as a neighborhood. They (SR2S) were key to the high participation in the parade and picnic at the beginning of the school year." Miller was excited about improvements that have come

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 3]



**Interview with
TAM's
ERIC SCHATMEIER**
See page 7



Cancel-a-Car™

**NEW
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROGRAM:**
See page 4

Safe Routes to Schools

A program of the
Transportation Authority
of Marin
3501 Civic Center Dr.
San Rafael, CA 94913
www.tam.ca.gov

Project Manager:
David Parisi
415-388-8978
david@parisi-associates.com

For general information on the program:

Program Director:
Wendi Kallins
415-488-4101
wendi@marinbike.org

For information on school activities and classes:

Project Coordinator:
Laura Kelly
415-456-3469 ext. 2#
laura@marinbike.org

Teen Coordinator:
Aviva Joseph
415-456-3469 ext. 5#
aviva@marinbike.org

SafeRoutes News

Editor: Wendi Kallins
Copy Editor: Connie Breeze
Design: Jeremy Thornton
Contributors: Wendi Kallins,
David Parisi,
Additional Editing:
Eric Schatmeier, Carey Lando



Manor Students use new crosswalk and designated route through Manor fields. Photo by Renee Goddard

MARIN SCORES BIG ON FEDERAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS FUNDING

Four Marin projects were approved for funding in the first round of the new Federal Safe Routes to Schools program grants. The grant awards were announced on June 4. The County will receive \$715,000 to construct sidewalk improvements along Marin Avenue, the primary walking route to and from Tam Valley School in unincorporated Mill Valley. The project will also include widening of the existing narrow sidewalk near the school entrance, and installation of high-visibility crosswalks.

San Anselmo will receive \$342,000 to provide sidewalks, curb ramps and high-visibility school crosswalks along the key routes to Wade Thomas and St. Anselm schools. An irregularly-shaped intersection in front of St. Anselm School will be modified to slow vehicular travel speeds

and shorten school crosswalks. Sun Valley School in San Rafael will get an improved pathway along Happy Lane in front of the school, funded with a \$362,000 grant.

Del Mar Middle School in Tiburon will get upgrades to 18 crosswalks, new curb ramps and new traffic controls along the routes to school with a grant of \$352,000. The TAM Safe Routes to Schools program assisted all of these communities in developing their plans.

Marin County Supervisor Hal Brown was able to secure \$50,000 in County funding for a new crosswalk to connect with a pathway that will funnel students toward a gate in the fence at Manor School in Fairfax. The school will follow up with education and training for students to follow the crosswalk and pathway safely.

STREET SMARTS PILOT PROGRAM BEGINS

The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) is excited to introduce a demonstration project for Street Smarts, a public education campaign designed to target unsafe behaviors of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists. Street Smarts uses both advertising and focused community-relations efforts to transmit messages about the need for behavior change to neighborhoods, schools, and businesses. Specific behaviors the campaign may address are speeding, red light running, stop-sign violations, neighborhood cut-throughs, school-zone compliance, and crosswalk safety and compliance.

Three communities, Corte Madera, Larkspur, and Mill Valley, have stepped up to pilot-test Street Smarts campaigns. Each of these communities will participate in the program through their planning, community services, public works, and law enforcement departments. The towns will also partner with their active Safe Routes to School Task Forces.

Working with each community, TAM will evaluate the effectiveness of the program by conducting "before and after" studies. If the program, or elements of the program, are successful, the Street Smarts campaign may be expanded countywide.

For more information on TAM projects go to www.tam.ca.gov



FAIRFAX PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE INSTALLED

On May 2, a pedestrian and bicycle bridge was installed across the creek at Marin Drive in Fairfax. The bridge is the final stage of the Safe Routes to Schools project that included a new sidewalk along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from Marin Drive to Olema Road. The bridge will provide access for pedestrians and bicyclists who previously shared a one-lane bridge with automobiles to gain access to Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and the private and public schools

of Fairfax. The project was partially funded by the Caltrans Safe Routes to Schools grant program with supplemental funding from the Transportation Authority of Marin. The Town also secured a grant to create a lighted crosswalk for students to cross Sir Francis Drake Blvd. This crosswalk will be built this fall and will be funded by the Federal Hazard Elimination Safety (HES) grant program.

*Kids pour onto the new Fairfax Bridge at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on May 9th.
Photo by Renee Goddard
(inset photo by Wendi Kallins)*

SUN VALLEY SUCCESS [CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE]

to the neighborhood as a result of SR2S, including funding for new sidewalks on Happy Lane. "This is great for the whole neighborhood."

Efforts Pay Off

Sun Valley has Walk and Roll to School Days every Wednesday. The school did the Golden Sneaker Award in the winter and the Pollution Punchcard contest in the spring. Team Leader Lori Hasset combines her organizing ability with some imaginative approaches. She and her daughter wrote and directed a humorous skit to kick off the contest, involving teachers and students. The kids also created banners of the pollution gremlin to mark Pollution Punchcard days. Lori kept meticulous records during the contests to track their success.

Organizing with the whole school can sometimes be challenging but it pays off when everyone is engaged with the effort. "We had a lot of

control and were able to figure out the percentage of participation," Lori says. "One teacher liked to devote time to why we are doing this in order to help the environment. You really do need everyone on board."

A dietician by trade, Lori sees the consequences of sedentary lifestyles in her work. "I think it is important that my kids are biking and walking safely. Once they are competent, I have one less kid to schlep around. It's self serving."

As the Sun Valley SR2S Committee puts its finishing touches on their school Travel Plan, they look forward to more community efforts. "Now we're starting to partner with the neighborhood association around disaster preparedness," says principal Harris. "It's all under the overarching goal of health and wellness. We're really focusing on community building and we really feel that SR2S is helping the community-wide focus."

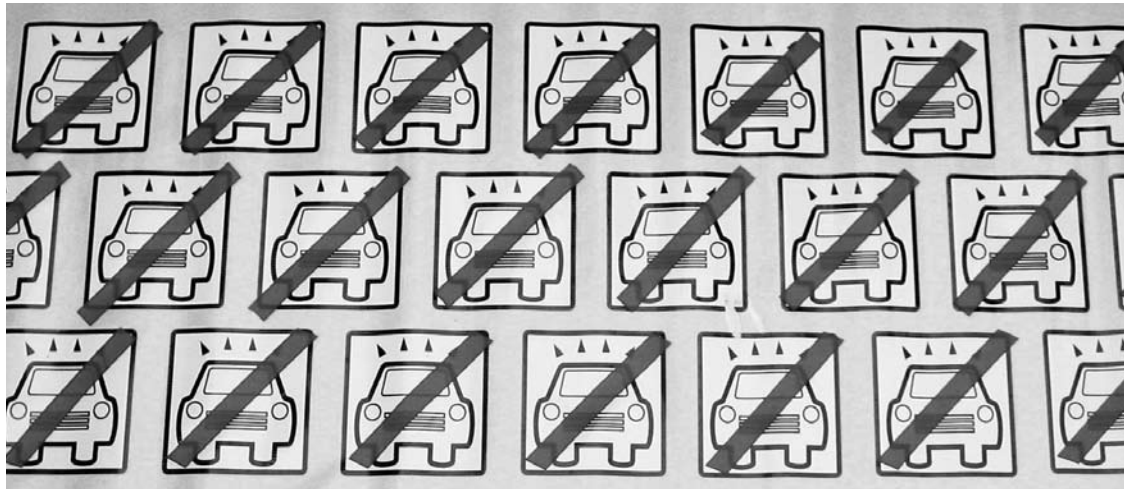
"We're really focusing on community building and we really feel that SR2S is helping the community-wide focus."

– Julie Harris,
Sun Valley Principal



CANCEL A CAR

Every time school volunteers gathered coupons worth 2000 pounds of carbon, another car was canceled on a banner that hung at the school.



Detail of banner showing cancelled cars.

Safe Routes Program Partners with New Environmental Program

“The overall theme is that the kids can have an impact...This program helps them learn that by being able to do small actions like turning off lights and walking to school, they can see the results.”

– Annie Sexton,
SEI Coordinator



It's the little things that count. That is the message of the new Cancel a Car program coming to 28 Marin schools this fall. Cancel a Car is the brainchild of Cool the Earth, a grassroots organization founded by Kentfield parents Carleen and Jeff Cullen.

Kick Off Assembly

Cool the Earth began with hosted showings of the film “An Inconvenient Truth” to faculty, staff and parents from Bacich and Kent schools. The Cullens met with the Kentfield School Board to propose a program that would show students all of the ways in which they could make a difference in alleviating the dangers of global warming. Cancel a Car was born.

Cancel a Car's first event was last winter, a humorous yet poignant assembly starring teachers, parents and students as the Sun, the Earth, a Polar Bear and Mr. Carbon Man, who kept heating up poor Mother Earth. After the assembly, children were issued coupon books. Each coupon was worth a set amount of carbon, which would be eliminated by simple actions,

suggested on the coupons, that the children and their families could take: changing to a low-energy light bulb, stopping junk mail, or of course, walking and biking to school. The children would turn in their coupons when they had taken an action. The coupons added up. Every time school volunteers gathered coupons worth 2000 pounds of carbon, another car was canceled on a banner that hung at the school. By the end of the school year they had canceled 65 cars at the two schools, “eliminating” 800,000 pounds of carbon.

Safe Routes to Schools partnered with the Cancel a Car program, giving safety classes and providing the Pollution Punchcard contest at Bacich. As a result of this partnership, Bacich reduced their single-occupant cars by 16% and Kent by 11%, from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007.

Partnerships Formed

With a grant funded by the Marin Community Foundation's Earth Day Everyday fund, the program is expanding to 28 schools throughout Marin. Cool the Earth is partnering with Strategic Energy Innovations (SEI) and Marin Conservation Corps (MCC) to administer the program. Each program will start off with an

.. SAVE A PLANET



At Bacich School in Kentfield, students participating in Cancel-a-Car made art out of junk mail.

assembly. Coupons issued to children will focus on three main sectors: energy use, waste and transportation. Throughout the year, initiatives will highlight individual coupons. Safe Routes to Schools will provide one of the transportation initiatives, including Walk to School Days and the Pollution Punchcard Contest.

Curriculum Developed

Annie Sexton of SEI is excited about launching this program. "The overall theme is that the kids can have an impact. Global Warming is such a big scary concept. This program helps them learn that by being able to do small actions like turning off lights and walking to school, they can see the results and combine their school's efforts with other schools to make a real difference."

SEI worked with MCC to create a curriculum to teach elementary and middle school youth about energy use, waste, and transportation and created project-based activities that will help children learn about reducing pollution in hands-on ways.

Cool the Earth Project Coordinator April Dean is looking forward to expanding the program into other schools and working with Safe Routes to Schools. "It's not just about reduc-

ing carbon but about making real changes in behavior," she explained. "When kids are walking and biking, it starts becoming ingrained that this is what they need to do all the time. Then we've changed a lifestyle. We're trying to change a generation's behavior by making children mindful of how they are moving about the world the rest of their lives. Parents know that walking and biking to school is healthy from an activity standpoint. This provides another angle: that it is also healthy from an environmental standpoint."



What we do in our homes affects theirs...

The 28 Schools Participating in Cancel-a-Car, and the Three Organizations That Will Head Up Their Efforts:

COOL THE EARTH

White Hill Middle
Ross
Neil Cummins
Brookside Upper
Brookside Lower
Wade Thomas
Park
Sun Valley
Bacich
Kent Middle

MARIN CONSERVATION CORPS

Davidson Middle
San Jose Middle
Sinloa Middle
Venetia Valley
Bayside
Martin Luther King
Middle
Willow Creek
Hall Middle
Hill Middle

STRATEGIC ENERGY INITIATIVES

Manor
Mary Silveira
Dixie
Vallecito
Edna Maguire
San Dominico
Rancho
Pleasant Valley
Bollinas
Novato Charter

SAFE ROUTES OFFERING SCHOOLPOOL ASSISTANCE

SchoolPool

Carpool • Walk • Bike Together



selected schools with specific assistance in matching parents to share responsibilities for transporting their children to school by walking, biking or carpooling together. Deborah

This year the SR2S staff will work with five schools to develop their School Pool programs. The SchoolPool outreach effort will provide

Cole, the new SR2S SchoolPool coordinator, joins the program after her amazing success last year in introducing SchoolPool at Edna Maguire School (see Safe Routes News, Spring 2007). Deborah will work with a liaison/organizer at each school to develop their programs, which will include neighborhood directories using geographic information system (GIS) data. The program will be evaluated at the end of the school year to determine how it should be expanded into other Marin schools.

SAFE ROUTES ON PARADE



Top left and top right: Safe Routes to Schools joined with other Manor School parents for the Fairfax Parade. Their theme: Protect Our Mama, complete with a giant-sized Mother Earth with baby carriage.

Fairfax photos by Wendi Kallins



Kids from the Mill Valley Middle School NET (Navigating Educational Trails) program, Sophie Davenport, Naisha and Deandre Niles, Claudia Visona, Gabe Marino, Chris Long, Satchel Yancey-Siegel, Haley Allen, and Tano Johnson joined Stephanie Moulton-Peters and Maureen Parton to promote walking and biking to school at the Mill Valley Memorial Day Parade..

Photo by Jeremy Thornton





TAM PLANNING MANAGER BELIEVES IN PUBLIC TRANSIT

Safe Routes to Schools is a program of the Transportation Authority of Marin. For this issue we interviewed Planning Manager Eric Schatmeier, who oversees the program at TAM.

Eric Schatmeier Walks His Talk

Every Monday morning, Eric Schatmeier, TAM Planning Manager, leaves his home in Alameda and does the car-commute grind to the TAM office in San Rafael. That is the only day Eric does that particular drive, though. Monday night he drives to the Larkspur ferry dock and parks his car. He takes the ferry to San Francisco and then another ferry to Alameda. For the rest of the week, he rides the ferries and picks up his car in Larkspur for the remaining five-mile drive to work. On Fridays, he drives the car back to Alameda.

Committed Transit Rider

Eric is a firm believer in public transit. "In college, I started using public transportation for convenience reasons. I was driving back and forth to work and to school every day and it was monotonous drudgery. I couldn't understand the allure of getting stuck in a daily traffic jam. Converting to transit, I reasoned, would not only be self serving, it would be safer, pollute less and use up less valuable space." He started taking the bus to work and has been using transit ever since. "I've read more books, gotten more rest, and saved a whole bus load of money," he quips. He started joining citizens' groups that promoted public transit. He got involved in movements to restore train service to Santa Cruz and successfully bring light rail to Santa Clara County.

Eric was the chair of the transportation committee for the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club from 1982 to 1988. "We became active in AC Transit board politics, grooming candidates for the AC Transit and BART boards." Eric's efforts helped make sure that Alameda County's first transportation sales tax measure got more money for AC Transit than the transit district had even requested.

Volunteering Turns to Career

Eric's volunteer work turned into a career path. "I would go to meetings as an activist and thought to myself, I could do this." He went back to graduate school to learn public administration and made his focus transportation. He was the Planning Manager for Caltrain from 1986 to 1992, helping to put bicycles on Caltrain. He then became the Operations Manager for California's Amtrak service, commuting by bus and train between the Bay Area and Sacramento. The Planning Manager Job at TAM seemed a perfect fit and a much better commute.

"One of the things that attracted me to Marin is that the primary emphasis in the sales tax plan is on alternative transportation modes," Eric says. He is especially fond of the SR2S program. "Measure A's Safe Access to School Strategy encourages youth to use something other than single-occupant cars for trips. If we can teach young people the importance of alternative modes and have them use those modes at the same time, it's a good thing for society, for the kids and for the schools."

TAM's goal is to see that every school child in the county has an opportunity to use alternative modes to school. Eric has high hopes for the future. "It would be a real success if one day no one needs to be driven to school."

"If we can teach young people the importance of alternative modes and have them use those modes at the same time, it's a good thing for society, for the kids and for the schools."

– Eric Schatmeier



Measure A, Marin's half-cent transportation sales tax, provides funding for Safe Routes to School programs in all Marin schools. If your school is not currently participating, please see the TAM web site, www.tam.ca.gov, or e-mail wendi@marinbike.org to learn how you can join the program.



Kyle Astroth

Samantha Appling

Liam Bourke

WINNING FACES

Twenty-seven schools participated in the Safe Routes to schools spring contests. Pollution PunchCard and the Frequent Rider Miles contest helped to get kids out of cars and onto their feet. Here are a few of the winners.

Kyle Astroth from St. Patrick's School in Larkspur looks forward to cashing in her gift certificate.

Samantha Appling, winner at Lower Brookside School in San Anselmo, thinks her

new bike is "awesome." She loves to ride her bike to school to keep our air clean.

Liam Bourke of Ross School in Ross is very excited about his bike. He's had lots of hand-me-downs over the years but this is his first brand-new bike ever. He has been riding to and from school almost every day since 2nd grade (he's going into 6th grade), so he needs a good bike. Plus he's beginning to enjoy riding up Tam with his dad and friends.

INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL WEEK: OCTOBER 1-5, 2007



Thanks to Clif Bar for generously donating 4,000 Z-bars for Walk to School Day.



**SAFE ROUTES
TO SCHOOLS**
MARIN COUNTY

A program of the Transportation Authority of Marin
P.O. Box 1115, Fairfax, CA 94978

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